



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Voices  
from the  
Gaps

# Courtnei Wright

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*Finally, it's time for Tillie and Will to jump over a broom lying on the ground. Mama says that the broom is for sweeping away their past lives as they begin a new life together. Grandma Sadie says it sweeps away evil spirits, too.*

— Jumping the Broom

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## Biography

Courtnei Wright was born in Washington, D.C. in 1950, and graduated from Trinity College in 1972 with an undergraduate degree in English and a minor in History. She went on to earn a Master of Education degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1980, and it was through this education that she developed her writing style, which is composed primarily of writings about the lives of African Americans. She adjusted well to life in Maryland at Johns Hopkins and still lives there with her husband, Stephen, and their son Ashley.

Wright is a fiction writer who finds deep enjoyment from writing. Although she finds writing solitary work, her family surrounds her. She has a son and husband, as well as a dog named Baya, who occupies the time in which she is not writing. Wright uses pieces of her own personality and experiences to create all of her characters. “They have often experienced the same feelings, frustration, pain, anger or happiness that I have. I know them intimately.”

### Quick Facts

- \* Born in 1950
- \* African-American novelist and children's book writer
- \* Author of *Jumping the Broom* (1994)

This page was researched and submitted by: Adam Ernst, Erin O'Tool, and Charles Rome on 6/23/98

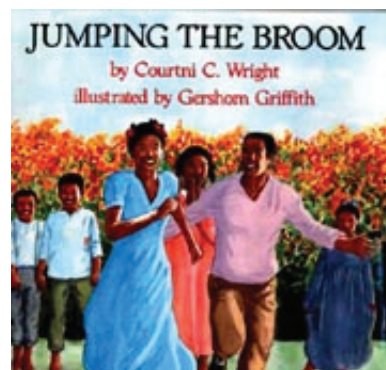


# Courtnei Wright

## Biography continued

Wright has written children's historical fiction, women's fiction, and romance in her young career. Yet this young career is one that is filled with many notable accomplishments. She served on the council for Basic Education National Endowment for the Humanities in 1990, and served as a consultant on National Geographic Society educational films on the practice and history of Kwanza. She also took part in the production of a volume of Shakespearean analysis, *The Women of Shakespeare's Plays*. These, along with a few book awards, make her career as an African American female author rather distinguishable.

Wright's children's books have received wide acclaim from teachers and reviewers, and have been incorporated into the Core Knowledge curriculum. Her first children's book, *Jumping the Broom*, was placed on the Society of School Librarians International's list of "Best Books of 1994." Wright uses "a wedding to portray the dignity of a people and the integrity of a family despite the very brutal circumstances of the infamous slave quarters" (Dinwiddie-Boyd). Her next book, *Journey to Freedom*, was named a "Teachers Choice" book by the International Reading Association. *Journey to Freedom* is another book that discusses the oppression of slavery and the attempts of a family to reach safety in Canada. Finally, her children's book *Wagon Train* is a story of continuing oppression after the abolition of slavery. It discusses the trials and tribulations that a family must face in its attempt to move west after the Civil War. *Wagon Train* was put on Emerge's "Recommended Reading" list in 1995. Besides her widely acclaimed children's books, she has also written *Blush*, the story of a young woman and her struggle to prove herself as a capable businesswoman. Wright also has an upcoming book due in August of 1998 entitled *It Had to Be You*, the tale of an attorney trying to choose between the love of her life and her career.





# Courtnei Wright

## Selected Bibliography

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*A Sure Thing* (1999).  
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*It had to be You* (1998).  
*Blush* (1997).  
*Wagon Train* (1995).  
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### Works about the author

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